

up the next generation of skilled workers, workers like Megan Widmer and Katie Barker. These two young ladies are active in the Anaconda Job Corps and they are here today with Ray. I want to thank them for their dedication to Montana.

With additional resources, we can ensure the Anaconda Job Corps and programs like it expand, create good paying jobs, and meet the needs of local industry with well-trained local workers.

But these types of community partnerships should not just be limited to Job Corps—we need to look at our education system and ensure it is creating a workforce that meets Montana's needs. Our two-year colleges are the key. That's why as part of Employ Montana, we need to give our community colleges the resources they need to develop the talent our employers are asking for. Because of our investment in education, a kid from Columbia Falls can go down to Flathead Community College, join its culinary program, and start a restaurant in Whitefish. And a young woman from Terry can travel southwest to Miles City Community College, enroll in its Commercial Driver's License course, and learn to drive an 18-wheeler hauling grain up to the Port of Raymond. We can work together to build on the success of our community colleges and expand our job training programs so that our workforce is ready to answer the call. Investing in our education is an investment in Montana's future.

Developing our human resources is critically important to a strong economy. But in Montana we have an incredible supply of natural resources as well. Included in Employ Montana is a plan to responsibly develop an all-of-the-above energy strategy. I plan to introduce the Carbon Capture Utilization and Storage Act, which will incentivize investment in the use of carbon capture technology. This legislation will provide tax credits to allow for Montana companies to burn coal cleaner and create good paying jobs.

But we can't ignore the fact that our climate is changing. This isn't a tree hugging issue; it's a jobs issue, and it's a food security issue. Montana's number one industry, agriculture, will lose profits and be more dependent on the federal government to pay the bills if we don't start taking proactive steps to protect our clean air and water. This is Montana's Constitutional right.

So I hope you will join me in supporting Employ Montana. From stronger infrastructure, to better broadband, increased start up grants and access to capital. From strengthening workforce programs and tapping our energy economy—Employ Montana will create high paying jobs and an economy we are proud of.

Now I would be remiss if I didn't take the last few minutes to talk about health care. It's a pressing issue and one that both Congress and the Montana Legislature will have to grapple with. Thanks to your good work last session Montana expanded Medicaid to over 60,000 hardworking people. For the first time in their lives these people were able to afford health coverage, you should be commended for that.

Repeal. Delay. Replace. Repeal and replace. Repeal and Delay. Obamacare. Trumpcare.

Here are the facts: The health care industry accounts for over 52,000 jobs in Montana. Health care in Montana is a \$4 billion industry. If Congress repeals the Affordable Care Act: Coverage would be ripped away from the 60,000 folks you gave hope to just two years ago. Montana's economy would lose \$3.1 Billion—with a capital "B"—between 2019 and 2023. It would add \$350 Billion to the deficit. We would lose 8,200 jobs in 2019 alone. And

rural areas would feel it the most, hospitals in towns like Culbertson, Hamilton, and my home town of Big Sandy would potentially have to board up their doors. Working together to fix the Affordable Care Act is just good business.

I've been around the state and the message is clear: People don't want Congress taking away their health care. Right now we have an incredible opportunity to find bipartisan solutions that can make health care more affordable for middle class families. But instead of having that important conversation, Congress is on the cusp of repealing all the progress we've made.

I want to be clear. I know premiums are rising. We cannot settle for any situation where middle class families cannot afford health insurance. I know that. But let's work together to keep the accountability up, and the costs down. Repealing the ACA without a plan for what comes next will not lower costs. Our families' health care is too important to throw it into chaos. We need to look before we leap. And we can't throw the baby out with the bath water. We need to be working to provide affordability to families and certainty to the rural communities that rely on our hospitals. I know we can find common ground to deliver that to Montana.

In Montana, there is far more that unites us than divides us. We can all agree that Montana raises the best agriculture products in the world. We can all agree that on a summer afternoon we'd rather be on the river than cooped up in an office. And we can all agree that Montana is home to the hardest working men and women in the world. We owe it to these hardworking men and women to come together to build a stronger Montana.

Together, we can build stronger roads and bridges. We can build a 21st Century infrastructure. We can build the quality products to supply folks at home and abroad. We can build a business friendly environment that encourages innovation and investment. We can build a more efficient workforce to meet the needs of our changing economy. We can build an energy sector that doesn't mortgage our future for today's profits. We can build a health care system that works for everyone, not just big insurance or drug companies. And we can build a stronger, better Montana for our next generation.

Good luck in the coming weeks.

God bless you, God bless Montana, and God bless this great country.

REMEMBERING TIM MITCHELL

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, today I wish to express my deep sorrow on the passing of Tim Mitchell. Through his absolute dedication to this institution and the special kind of person he was, Tim made the Senate a better place.

Tim served as the assistant secretary for the minority. As Senator Reid shared during his September remarks in celebration of Tim's 25 years of exemplary service, Tim began his career in the Senate working for Senator Don Riegle, Jr., of Michigan.

He later worked for Senator Tom Daschle of South Dakota and the Democratic Policy & Communications Committee before joining the Democratic floor staff in 2001. Tim also took night classes at Catholic University of America Columbus School of Law—an impressive feat.

The Senate often calls for long days and longer nights. Debates on the floor

may get heated, rollcall votes may drag on for hours, but Tim always kept a calm temperament and kind demeanor. He was soft spoken, but firm—not an easy feat while juggling the Members of this body's unique needs and passions.

He was simply the best at what he did, and he made a real difference in how the Senate worked. The value of his service is incalculable.

To Tim's family—his wife, Alicia, and his 11-year-old son, Ben—I am so sorry for your loss. I am forever grateful that you shared Tim with us for so many years.

I echo Senator Reid's previous remarks: Tim's time here changed the Senate and this country for the better.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

STATE OF THE UNION ESSAY CONTEST FINALISTS

● Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask to have printed in the RECORD some of the finalist essays written by Vermont high school students as part of the seventh annual State of the Union essay contest conducted by my office.

The material follows:

FINN ABBEY, MOUNT MANSFIELD UNION HIGH
SCHOOL FRESHMAN (FINALIST)

Our country has faced many issues in the past, but today we face one of our greatest challenges. Division. We have forgotten to care for each other; forgotten that we are only strong with each other. We are growing too uncompassionate, too distrustful of each other. We can and must remember that we are not enriched by the success of one person, but rather the success of many. We prosper not with the defeat of others, but with their success. And keeping with the philosophy that we must succeed together, we must work together on smaller challenges.

Our country needs a system that not only doesn't punish the poor for their very existence, but offers every person the chance to better themselves. The hope that your children will have a better life than you has long been a staple of the American dream. To accomplish this, we need to create a liveable wage of \$15, and create a progressive tax system that leaves the poor with more and takes fairly from those who can afford it. We cannot be satisfied in the splendor of ourselves and people like us when our fellow Americans are living in the streets.

We must also institute universal health care. This will involve higher taxes, of course, but, combined with strict laws about pharmaceutical pricing and a fair tax system, will ensure that our country is healthy and our middle class stays strong. No one should ever have to choose between food and medicine. We need change.

We also must guarantee everyone the right to vote, and that their votes count. Time and time again voter ID laws have suppressed the African-American vote. We cannot say we are equal when we pass laws with the purpose of lowering voter turnout.

We also have to remove another recent mistake in election law: Citizens United. We cannot accept catering to special interests as a side effect of democracy; we must recognize it as a barrier to a fairer system. We must put the redrawing of congressional districts in the hands of independent commissions to prevent gerrymandering. Anything